THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) to (d) Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (HPCL) had entered into Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in October, 2007 with M/s. GAIL (India) Limited, Oil India Limited, TOTAL France S.A. and Mittal Energy Investments Pte. Ltd.., to explore possibility for setting up a 14-15 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA) capacity Refinery cum Petrochemical Project in the proposed Petroleum, Chemicals & Petrochemicals Investment Region (PCPIR) near Visakhapatnam. The pre-feasibility study for the proposed project has been completed.

The project feasibility study is still in a very preliminary stage. During April/May 2009, HPCL alongwith the consortium partners will once again examine the supply demand balance and carry out techno economic evaluation of this project. Only, when it is established that the project is techno economically viable and the consortium partners agree to proceed with the next phase of Feed Study of the project, HPCL will be able to work out the details pertaining to employment creation and the assistance required from the State Government for this project.

Due to melting down of the global economy and unprecedented reduction in demand of petroleum products, the viability to proceed with the feasibility study of this project will be once again reviewed in the month of April/May 2009. The consent from consortium partners are also still awaited to proceed with the feasibility study in view of the current economic situation.

Government of Andhra Pradesh have sought support of the Government of India for provision of external infrastructure linkages to PCPIR.

Security arrangements at airports

*316. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether following the Mumbai terror attack, his Ministry had a high level meeting to assess aviation security in the country and review security arrangements at all airports;

(b) whether high level meeting was attended by all Central intelligence agencies, National Security Guards (NSG), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) etc.;

(c) if so, what concrete steps and measures Government has taken to meet the threat;

(d) whether it was decided that Air Force and Civil Aviation authorities will jointly have surveillance; and

(e) if so, to what extent this has been finalized?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Since the information is security related, it would not be proper to divulge it on the floor of the House. However, some of the measures undertaken are:

(i) NAKAS are put by CISF/State Police at the approach road to airports for random checking of vehicles/persons/articles;

(ii) All unattended articles are to be reported and checked for Improvised Explosive Device (IED) etc.;

(iii) Surveillance/watch are enhanced both on land side and airside of the airports;

(iv) Perimeter Patrolling and guarding of funnel area are intensified during operational hours;

(v) All access control points are reinforced;

(vi) Quick Response Teams (QRTs)/Striking Reserve at airports are strengthened;

(vii) Secondary Security Check at ladder point of aircrafts is being introduced at all airports and;

(viii) A thorough and complete screening of both hold baggage and hand baggage are to be carried out.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) Since the information is secret in nature, it would not be proper to divulge it on the floor of the House.

Uniformity of rates of petro products in the Country

*317. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the present rates of diesel, petrol, cooking gas and kerosene in every State and Union Territory;

(b) the difference of rates of various oil products in each of the States and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether there is any proposal for uniformity of rates in all the States;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) and (b) The present rates of four sensitive petroleum products, namely, Diesel, Petrol, PDS Kerosene and Domestic LPG in each State Capital/Union Territory are given in the statement. (*See* below)

The basic ex-storage prices of sensitive petroleum products are uniform at all refinery locations throughout the country and the difference in price from State to State is due to the different rates of Sales Tax/VAT and other local taxes levied by the State Governments.

(c) to (e) The subject matter of Sales Tax comes under the purview of the State Governments and they are vested with the power to levy Sales Tax/VAT within their States. The Central Government has been continuously taking up the matter with the State Governments for reduction in the rates of Sales Tax/VAT.